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COUNCIL UPDATE

ONTARIO ADVISORY COUNCIL ON WOMEN'S ISSUES

MAY 1985

Health Conference

Attendance at our Women and Health conference March 1-2 was even higher than expected. Approximately 400 people came to hear 40 speakers, panelists, and moderators.

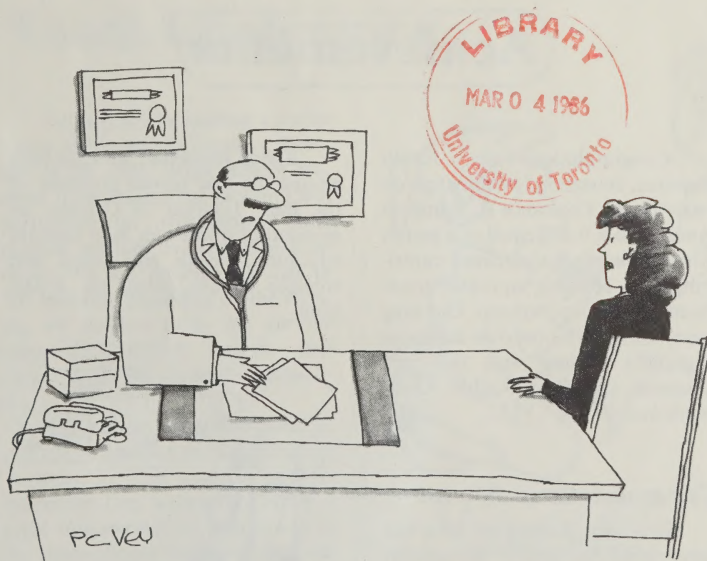
The intensity of the speeches and discussions indicated a strong need for more action on the issues raised. Women who came for one session stayed on, recognizing that all points were important to them and to their families and friends. Everyone went away with new ideas, information,

and plans of action. We were all able to expand our list of resource people with Council adding over 200 people to its mailing list.

Considerable emphasis was placed on prevention of illness, wellness and a more holistic approach to healthcare. There was a continuing focus on the correlation between a woman's physical health and her mental state. The stress of dual roles, poverty, and unequal treatment is a significant factor and a

decrease of this stress would remedy or ease many of women's health problems.

Council will be producing a transcript of the proceedings and we will be incorporating some of the ideas generated at the conference into a brief to be submitted to the Minister of Health. The proceedings will be available shortly and the brief later in the year.



"You've been eating right, getting regular exercise, taking vitamins and haven't been sick in a year... Do you want to talk about it?"

NEW WOMAN, DECEMBER 1984

Women in Canada

A Statistical Report, has just been released by Statistics Canada. Covering the period 1970 to the present with material on family, education, labour force activity and criminal victimization, it also includes analysis. A valuable tool for researchers and lobbyists, it is available in English or French for \$25 from Publications, Sales and Service, StatCan, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0T6

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We Have Moved!

Council's address and phone number have changed as follows: Ontario Advisory Council on Women's Issues, 5th Floor, 880 Bay St., Toronto, Ontario M7A 1N3. Telephone (416) 965-5824.

Council News

Prior to the election Council sent letters to the 3 provincial party leaders requesting their responses to questions on 7 major issues. Copies of their responses are still available from Council. You may think it's too late, the election is over, but you might want to be able to remind them later of what they promised before!

Council will be having its second regional consultation of the year in St. Catharines, May 24-25. Meetings will be held with various women's groups and council members will visit women's centres and schools in the area. Call Council for further details.

Copies of the proceedings from both the Women in The North conference held in Dryden last September and the Forum on Equal Value held in Toronto in February 1984 are now available from Council.

One of Council's goals is to provide bilingual sessions or French/English translation at future consultations. The inclusion of this service will be determined in part by location of the event and funds being allocated.

Participation

Council printed 20,000 copies of its pamphlet, *A Woman's Guide to the 1985 Ontario Election*. It was designed to assist women to become more involved in the process that elects our legislators. Many inequalities are still imbedded in the laws of this province, despite the Equality Provision of the Charter. Changing laws will not eliminate them all but can provide for an increasing improvement of the basic structure of our society.

One of the best ways we can have input and exert our influence on these changes is by becoming participants in elections as candidates, campaign workers, debaters, questioners and resource people. Candidates must be made aware of and learn to share our concerns.

The Provincial election is over but the Municipal elections will be taking place all over the province in November. Watch for our Municipal Election Guide and start talking

now to declared candidates and incumbents. Become involved in the nominations so you can help choose people who are supportive of issues important to you.

Results and Promises

The election furor is now past and we're encouraged to see 9 women in the Legislature but it's still a far cry from 52% representation.

Council members will be attending the opening session of the Legislature to watch for the introduction of amendments to the Family Law Reform Act as promised during the campaign.

We will also be urging implementation of equal value in the Ontario civil service this year.

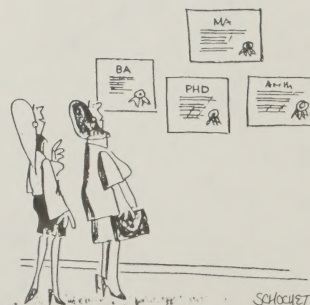
Achievements

Congratulations to Judith Ramirez, Intercede Coordinator, on receiving the Constance B. Hamilton Award which is presented to a person who has made a significant contribution to securing equitable treatment for Toronto women. Our long association with *Intercede* makes us especially pleased with this well deserved award to Judith. Good work Judy!

Congratulations also to:

Dr. June Robertson who has been named president of the Ontario Association of Optometrists. She is the first woman to hold that post. Conversely a man has been named head of the spouses auxiliary, a position normally held by a woman.

Rhoda Innuksuk, who has been elected the first female president of the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, an association whose aim is to improve education, health and status and enhance cultural values for 22,000 Inuit.



"That's my feminine protection."

The Charter of Rights

Section 15, The Equality Provision of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms says "every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination...". The inclusion of this section is a major step forward in achieving equality for women in most aspects of our lives.

The Charter contains many sections that will in some way affect women and the courts will be defining these sections for some time to come. It is to the benefit of us all that we pay close attention to the decisions of the courts and keep ourselves and the general public aware of what is at stake.

It would be a mistake to think the Charter belongs only to the legal community — it is ours. We fought for it, and now we must ensure that it works for us.

Sudbury Consultation

Our meeting and consultation in Sudbury generated a great deal of interest in local women's groups and press.

The first day Council members visited various places including the Industrial Training Centre for Women, Geneva House (a transition house), the Sudbury Rape Crisis Centre, Recovery Home for Women Alcoholics, Cambrian College, a Francophone community centre, Laurentian University, and the Elizabeth Fry Society.

The consultation was well attended with presentations by groups from Sudbury, Timmins, North Bay and Manitoulin Island.

The Sudbury consultation was a success in that both Council and the local groups are now more aware of the scope of each other's activities and influence. Council has become increasingly aware of the need to reach outside of the major urban areas and the local groups are doing more networking amongst

themselves for mutual support.

A report on the meetings is being prepared and will be sent to everyone who attended. Anyone else who wishes a copy should write Council.

We are looking forward to this month's consultation in St. Catharines.

Fraser Report

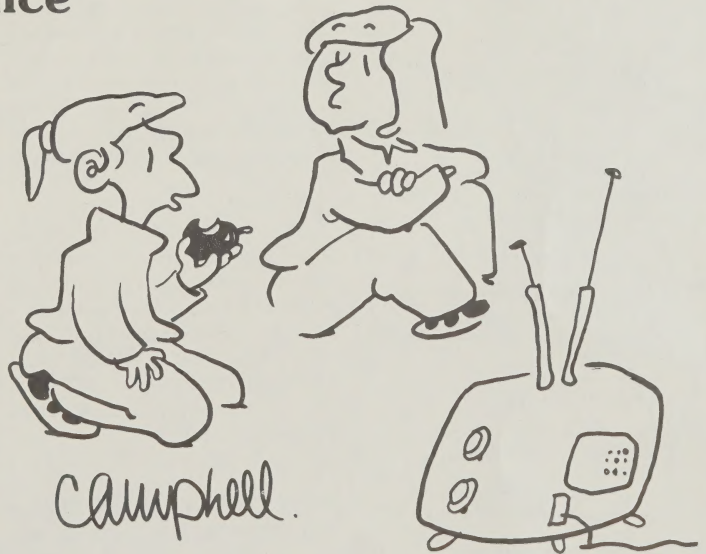
The Fraser Committee Report on Pornography and Prostitution has now been published. Council submitted a brief to the Committee in April 1984 containing 39 recommendations. A number of these have been incorporated in whole or in part although the Report is less severe than our brief in several areas.

Copies of the Report are available from Supply and Services at \$28 for the 2 volume set. Write Publishing Centre, Hull, Quebec K1A 0S9.

Youth Conference

Council will be holding a major youth conference in Toronto, October 18-20, 1985. High School students from around the province will participate in workshops, role-playing sessions and panel discussions. We are anticipating 200 to 700 students, depending on the funding we receive from the various ministries, school boards and corporations we are now approaching.

We will be asking members of women's groups, in and around Toronto, to billet students in their homes on that weekend. This is a great opportunity to participate in the International Year of the Youth and to share your views with these young people. Perhaps you can discuss if billeting is a possibility at your next meeting and have a representative contact Council.



"What are you going to have when you grow up. . . patients, clients or constituents?"

COUNCIL UPDATE

The Council is an advisory body to the Ontario Government on all matters pertaining to women. Established at armslength from the Government, it is in the unique position of being the *ONLY* official advisory body on women's issues. This means that the Government has made a commitment to listen to its views and recommendations, and this unique relationship allows the Council to effectively challenge Government's direction and policies.

There are 16 members, including a President, all of whom are appointed by Cabinet on a part-time basis for three-year terms. Members come from around the Province, and for the most part, do not represent organizations or groups.

The Council attempts to bring a balance of views of women from across the Province to the attention of the Government. Its unique relationship with the Government gives it a direct channel to the ears of the decision-makers of Ontario.

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Sam Ion, *President*, Toronto
Ed Arundell, Toronto
Sarah Band, Toronto
Kay Howland, Dunrobin
William Kelloway, Ottawa
Sandra Kerr, Oakville
Dorothy Kirby-Rawn, Etobicoke
Annabelle Logan, London
Sandra Manzig, Windsor
Diane Marleau, Sudbury
Ceta Ramkhalawansingh, Toronto
Eleanor Ryan, Ottawa
Mariah Seymour, Kenora
Barbara Stone, St. Catharines
Kay Toye, Burlington
Glenna Carr, *ex-officio*, Toronto

SPEAKERS: Members of Council are available for speaking engagements. Please write to Council with details of your meeting.

COUNCIL STAFF

Bridget Vianna, *Executive Officer*
Lydia Oleksyn, *Administrative Assistant*
Lindsay DuBois, *Research Assistant*
Jean Wilson, *Secretary*

COUNCIL ADDRESS

5TH FLOOR, 880 BAY ST.,
TORONTO, ONTARIO M7A 1N3
(416) 965-5824.

POTPOURRI

Hurrah! The **EQUALITY PROVISION** of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms finally took effect April 17, 1985. Many of our laws still reflect discriminatory attitudes. The Legal Education and Action Fund is raising money to fight equality cases in the courts. Write for their bilingual brochure. LEAF, P.O. Box 6989, Station A, Toronto, Ontario M5W 1X7 or phone (416) 964-2789.

INTERIM PLACE, a halfway house for abused women has produced an innovative fundraiser. **FARE FOR FRIENDS** is a treasury of sumptuous recipes that retails at \$12.95. Interim Place will sell to other women's groups for \$8 + shipping. When it's resold, both groups benefit. Write: Fare For Friends, P.O. Box 173 Clarkson, Mississauga, Ontario L5J 3Y1

LET'S TALK ABOUT SEXUAL ASSAULT is a booklet published by the Victoria Women's Sexual Assault Centre and is aimed at women aged 13-19. This is a unique resource for anyone working with adolescents. Write details to the Council Centre at 1045 Linden Ave., Victoria, B.C. V8V 4H3

The National Film Board has many films of interest to women. The selections screened at our Health Conference were greeted enthusiastically. Two good catalogues are **OUR BODIES, OUR MINDS** and **BEYOND THE IMAGE**. Write the NFB at 1 Lombard St., Toronto, Ontario M5C 1J6

WOMEN AT WORK, Making It In Two Worlds from Alberta Manpower gives reassurance, practical tips and advice to women re-entering the workforce. Write: Alberta Manpower, Career Services

Branch, 201 Sund Building, 10363-108 St., Edmonton, Alberta T5J 1L8

BENIGN BREAST DISORDER affects close to 50% of all women. Public Relations Services Limited is offering a free program for groups of 25 or more women. A Registered Nurse will discuss BBD, self-examination, and treatments. Call Jane Hope or Debbie Garry at (416) 922-5556 for more information and to book a discussion leader.

The **BARBARA SCHLIFER COMMEMORATIVE CLINIC** opened May 6 at 188 Dupont St., Toronto, Ontario M5E 2E6. The clinic is offering long-term counselling, legal help and other assistance to women who encounter violence or sexual harassment. Call (416) 964-3855

The **END OF THE DECADE** Conference takes place in Nairobi in July. Hundreds of people involved in changing the status of women around the world will meet to discuss improvements made and still to be made during the Decade of Women. For more information write Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, P.O. Box 1541, Station B, Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5R5

WOMEN'S INFORMATION LINE opened in January and offers information about groups, events, political activities and feminist resources in Toronto. The tape machine is always on with real people answering Wed. & Thurs. 7-10 p.m. Phone (416) 926-8700

Material for Potpourri will be welcomed, however, publication will depend on space and be at the discretion of the publisher.